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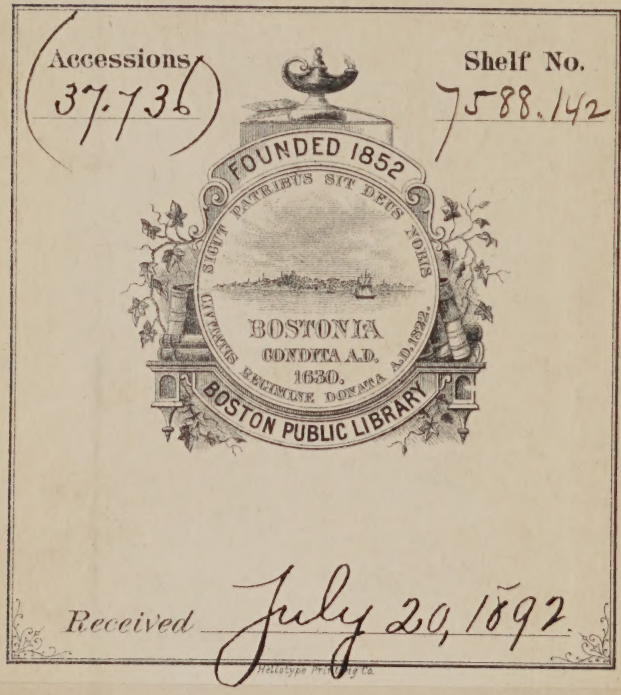

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A

LETTER

TO THE

MECHANICS OF BOSTON,

RESPECTING THE FORMATION OF

A CITY TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

FROM A COMMITTEE

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY

FOR THE

Suppression of Intemperance.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY THE
MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION
OF INTEMPERANCE.

1831.

From D. R.

To the Mechanics of Boston.

Gentlemen,

The subscribers, a committee appointed for the purpose by the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, would respectfully appeal to you in behalf of the objects of this Society.

You form a large and powerful body in our community; and your influence is, and must be, strongly felt in every cause to which it is given. We speak the language of honest conviction, when we say, that to no class among us is the body politic more indebted for the good principles, and the good habits, which are the conservative power of our free institutions, than to our mechanics. To no class, therefore, may an appeal be made with stronger confidence for any efforts, or sacrifices, that may be demanded for the advancement of public virtue, and of general happiness. Our wish is, to obtain your coöperation for the advancement of the cause of temperance in our city. The progress of this cause, over a considerable part of our country, has been, and continues to be, very great. Yet comparatively little has been done for it in any of the large cities of our Union. It is, indeed, a fact, the publication of which ought to call forth the whole energies of the friends of temperance in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Boston, that these cities contain more than 6,000 places, which are licensed by their respective governments for dram-selling; and thus for the greatest possible encouragement and extension of intemperance. But, great as are the obstacles which

are here to be overcome, they are not insurmountable. If we have a larger, and more imposing, amount of vice in cities, than in our villages, we have also a proportionally greater amount of moral power, which we may bring to bear upon any moral enterprise. That this power, however, may be effectual for the subversion of any great evil, or the attainment of any great good, the individuals who possess it must be brought into *combination*. And, that intemperance may be banished from among us, or even to any considerable extent restrained, *the friends of temperance must be associated in the cause.* In other words, *Temperance Societies must, as extensively as possible, be formed in our cities.* These have been the instruments of the great changes, in this respect, which have been wrought in our land. And may not Temperance Societies be formed in cities? or can they be formed among any class of our fellow citizens with a better prospect of maintaining their character, and of accomplishing their objects, than among our mechanics? We address ourselves to you, Gentlemen, on this subject, not because we suppose that there is more intemperance in your department of our society than in any other of our city;—for we utterly disclaim this supposition;—but because we believe that no other class of our fellow citizens holds a greater amount of moral power than is held by you; and because we therefore feel assured, that, if you will heartily engage in the cause, a change may soon be wrought among us, in effecting which, you will deservedly be ranked among the best benefactors of our city. Allow us, then, respectfully to ask the Master and the Journeyman Mechanic to look at a few facts respecting this cause. These facts are obtained from various documents, of which we need only say, that they are published with the sanction of names as respectable as any in our country. We entreat, therefore, that these facts may be pondered. And having given to

them the consideration which they deserve, *say, if you are not willing to join a Society for the Promotion of Temperance in Boston?*

In the *first* place, then, we ask you to look at the progress which has been made in the formation of Temperance Societies.

About twenty years have now passed since the organization of the first society which was ever formed for the suppression of intemperance. We refer to the Massachusetts Society for this object. A few joined it. But for a long time it excited but little notice, and accomplished but little good. It took, indeed, no very high aim, nor did it make any very great efforts. The evils of intemperance still extended more and more widely; and the temptations and facilities to the most dangerous indulgences of appetite were in every house, and were daily soliciting parents and children, the young and the old. Many thousands were thus annually brought to poverty, were stimulated to crime, were affected with the most loathsome diseases, and were prematurely falling the victims of death. Nay, it was publicly said, and it began to be feared, that we were about to be *a nation of drunkards.* At length, a voice was heard,—from whom it first came we know not,—boldly assuming the principle, that *intemperance is to be suppressed only by a union of the friends of temperance in the cause of a total abstinence from intoxicating stimulants, except for medicinal purposes.* We think that five years have not yet passed since the first annunciation of this great principle; and we know that many, even of the most temperate men in our country at first, shrunk from the suggestion of it. But there is hardly a fact in the whole history of human morals which is more wonderful, than is that of the triumph of this principle over the incredulity, the doubts, the scoffs, the ridicule, and even the shameless passion, with which it was for some time, and,

though in a far less degree, even still continues to be assailed. Nothing, indeed, even to many of the most zealous in the cause of temperance, seemed more improbable, than it was that this principle should ever be widely and cordially adopted as a bond of union. A small number, however, were persuaded to combine in the cause. Every measure short of this had proved to be utterly inefficient; and it was therefore resolved, that a fair trial at least should be made of the power of this principle. Laughed at, therefore, as they were, and stigmatized, and persecuted, its supporters firmly held their ground; and soon they were strengthened by increasing numbers. In 1828, there were 222 county, town, and other Societies of this character in the United States. And on the 1st of May, 1831, it is known, from returns actually made, that there were then in Maine 140 Societies; in New Hampshire, 196; in Vermont, 131; in Massachusetts, 209; in Connecticut, 202; in Rhode Island, 20; in New York, 727; in New Jersey, 61; in Pennsylvania, 124; in Delaware, 5; in Maryland, 38; in the District of Columbia, 10; in Virginia, 13; in North Carolina, 31; in South Carolina, 16; in Georgia, 60; in Florida, 1; in Alabama, 10; in Mississippi, 19; in Louisiana, 3; in Tennessee, 15; in Kentucky, 23; in Ohio, 104; in Indiana, 25; in Illinois, 12; in Missouri, 4; in Michigan Territory, 13;—total of those from which information has been received, 2200. These Societies, it is known, consist of more than 170,000 members. Here, then, is a manifestation of moral power, which may well call forth the highest admiration, and imbolden to the most resolute and persevering exertions in the cause of temperance. It is known, likewise, that there are many other Temperance Societies, from which no specific information has been received; and it is believed that the whole number of these associations in our country, at the present time, is not less than 3,000; and comprehending not less than 300,000 members!

In this single aspect of the subject, is it not, we ask, one of the most interesting and animating which can be addressed either to the patriot or to the Christian? We know not the moral spectacle on the earth which is more grand or more attractive than this. Look at the greatness of the evil which was to be overcome;—a greatness which no language can exaggerate! Look at the simplicity of the means employed to overcome it! Look at the extent and glory of the triumph which has been obtained in this cause! But there are yet other views of it, to which we beg leave to call your attention.

It is asked, *secondly*, What good has been done by Temperance Societies?

We answer, that if no other good had been accomplished by them, than the combination of 300,000 individuals in the cause of temperance, even supposing that not one of these individuals had been intemperate, the remuneration would have been ample for all the labor and the cost at which this combination has been effected. *Three hundred thousand persons*, and *many of them young persons, are combined in the cause of abstinence from the use of ardent spirits, except as a medicine.* Under this engagement, they are morally secure. Some of them, indeed, may still fall into intemperance; but probably not a twentieth part of the number, that would otherwise have fallen into it.

Yet this is not all the good which these Societies have done. It appears from the Report of the American Temperance Society, in January, 1831, that not less than 3,000 *cases are known of individuals, who had lived in intemperance, and who, through the influence of these Societies, have been entirely reclaimed.* Six years ago, every confirmed drunkard was given up as irretrievably lost. No project was thought to be more visionary, and no labor more hopeless, than for the recovery of one who had been long intemperate. But Temper-

ance Societies have, in this respect, wrought changes which are only less than miraculous. They have brought to light, as it would seem that no other means could have brought to light, the power of opinion and of sympathy. They have opened their arms to the drunkard. They have restored him to mental and to bodily soundness. They have restored him to himself, to his family, to society, and to his Maker. Is not this a good which is worth all the efforts that have been made to obtain it?

Again. Through the influence of these Societies, *more than a thousand distilleries in the United States have been stopped; and more than half of those which were in operation in the state of New York a year ago are now disused.* Who could have anticipated a result like this from the exertions of five or six years?

Again. It is ascertained that, within the same time, upwards of 3,000 *sellers of ardent spirits have wholly renounced the traffic.* Could six or sixty years of legislation upon the subject have done as much for the cause of temperance as this?

Again. The *diminution* in the quantity of *foreign liquors* passing through the New York market, during the last three years, has been 1,471,718 gallons; saving about as many dollars, and being a falling off of more than 53 per cent. Of *domestic spirits*, the diminution has been about 2,000,000 gallons; worth, at first cost, about $500,000; the whole, estimated at the wholesale price, making a saving to the community of nearly $2,000,000. How much greater must the saving be, if this quantity be estimated at the retail price!

Again. See what these Societies have done, and are doing, for the *towns* in which they have been established.

We refer you, for example, to *East Machias, in Maine.* A Temperance Society went into operation there on the 17th of February, 1827. At that time, there were ten grog-shops

in the village, at one of which twelve hogsheads of rum were annually drank. But there is not now, says the Second Report of the American Temperance Society, a licensed grog-shop in that place. All the principal traders have engaged, that they will not import any more ardent spirits. A fine saw-mill was recently built there, and the foundations were laid when the weather and the water were extremely cold. But the mill was completed without the use of any ardent spirits. Two masters of vessels, also, belonging to that place, have set a noble example. They have been to sea without having provided any ardent spirits, and have made decidedly the shortest and most profitable trips. It is worth mentioning, also, that an aged mechanic, who, for nearly 50 years, had spent a large part of his earnings for ardent spirits, and thereby reduced himself to want, and destroyed the happiness of a respectable family, has joined the Society, and been a member for nearly two years. He has since wholly abstained from spirituous liquors; and, with no other means than he before possessed, has provided well for his family, and has built a comfortable house for himself at the expense of $400, for which he owes not more than $50. How many thousands are there, now, in the most wretched poverty, who, if they would follow the example of this mechanic, might be as respectable and respected, as happy, and as well off, as he is!

Again. Look at *Belchertown, in Massachusetts.* In June, 1827, eleven persons there associated in the cause of abstinence from ardent spirits, except for medicinal purposes. In June, 1828, a public meeting was called, to take into consideration the expediency of forming a Society for the Promotion of Temperance. This Society, says Mr. Coleman, the minister of Belchertown, has gradually increased, and now consists of 120 male members. And the result has been, that while, in 1824 8056 gallons of ardent spirits were con-

sumed in that town, at the cost of $4883, the quantity consumed in 1828 was 2090 gallons, at the cost of $1449. That is, a less quantity of ardent spirits by 5966 gallons was consumed there in 1828 than in 1824; and the saving which was thus made in a single year was $3443. Now, the annual taxes of Belchertown, for the year 1828, were, minister's tax, $600; school tax, $300; town tax, $1200; and county tax, $330;—total, $3430. The saving, therefore, which was made in that town, through the instrumentality of its Temperance Society, in one year, was thirteen dollars more than the whole amount of its annual taxes. Let there be an equal reformation in the use of ardent spirits—and why may there not be?—in all our towns, and not only will there be no complaint of taxes, but in a few years the necessity will scarcely remain of prisons or of alms-houses.

In truth, it would not be difficult to make a large book, consisting of details of facts in answer to the question, What good has been done by Temperance Societies? If ever a cause has been followed with the blessing of Heaven, this cause has that blessing. Agriculturists, mechanics and merchants, physicians, clergymen and lawyers, men and women, the old and young, and from one extremity of our country to the other, are coöperating for the promotion of temperance. New associations are forming, and old ones are receiving new members. Military companies are uniting for the disuse of ardent spirits on parade days. Merchants in the country are ceasing to buy and to sell them. Buildings are erected, and factories are conducting their operations, without them. There are towns in which three fourths of the inhabitants are members of Temperance Societies; and, consequently, in which three fourths of the inhabitants refrain from the use of ardent spirits, except for medicinal purposes; and there are towns in which more is saved by abstinence from this poisonous and destructive stimulant, than the whole amount

of their taxes. How light, indeed, would be the burden of the support of government, of schools, and of the institutions of religion, if the single vice of intemperance were banished from among us! For example, it is estimated that, from 1828 to 1829, not less than $100,000 were saved to New Hampshire through its Temperance Societies. What, then, would be the saving in that state, and in our own, and in any or all our states, if all should be combined in the cause of temperance! Above all, what would be the moral saving, the prevention of every species of vice and wretchedness, the security given to life and property, and the addition made to virtue and happiness, if temperance should universally prevail among us! And how is it to prevail, but by the combined and persevering efforts of the friends of temperance? And who can consistently call himself a friend to temperance, who is unwilling to give his influence and efforts to the cause of suppressing intemperance?

In the *third* place, we would state a few facts respecting licensed dram-shops in Boston.

The following is a statement of the houses licensed to sell ardent spirits in this city:—

"I certify, that the following licenses were granted by the Board of Aldermen in the year 1830, from January 1st to December 31st:

Innholders, ...	70
Victuallers, ...	594
Retailers, ...	22
Confectioners, ...	4
	690

Signed,

S. F. M'Cleary, *City Clerk*"

This certificate, upon the face of it, intimates that we have only 22 *licensed retailers* in the city. But is it so? Whence

comes it, then, that so many grocery shops have been converted into tippling shops? that drams, in almost every variety of forms, are sold in soda shops? and that rooms are open for retailing ardent spirits by the glass in almost every street in which it may be hoped that a tippler may be found, or a novice may be decoyed, and persuaded to associate with drinkers? Are all these, or nearly all of them, unlicensed places? No. There are, without doubt, many small unlicensed dram-shops in the city. But far the largest number of those which stand out in such offensive array, are *supported by the authority of law.* Is it asked, Can this be so? The mystery of this iniquity may be explained in a few words. The blame lies by no means altogether with the city government. The difficulties with which they are environed, with respect to licenses, are very great. We will state a fact, with respect to the law upon this subject, which will explain the enigma in the certificate of the city clerk, that, while it is there intimated, that we have only 22 licensed retailers of ardent spirits in the city, it actually expresses also the authority upon which we have 668 places which are licensed for dram-selling. And we will likewise state a fact, in regard to the mode of obtaining licenses, by which the city government is, and must be, greatly embarrassed; for it is but fair, when they are censured, to look honestly at the circumstances in which they are compelled to act in the case.

Let us, then, look again at the certificate of the city clerk. We are here told, that, in the year 1830, there were licensed 70 innholders, 594 victuallers, 22 retailers, and 4 confectioners. What, then, is meant by the terms *innholders*, *victuallers*, and *retailers?* and what is required of any one, under either of these names, to obtain a license?

In the first place, a *retailer*, in the eye of law, is one who is licensed to sell ardent spirits in a less quantity than ten

gallons. But the law also *prohibits him from suffering any part of the spirits thus sold to be drank in his house, store, or shop; or in any of the dependencies thereof.* Unless, therefore, by a violation of law, no tippling can take place in the shop of a retailer.

Secondly. It is to be understood, that, till the 14th of December, 1816, the law knew no distinction between the terms "*common victualler*, *innholder*, or *taverner*." They all meant the same thing; that is, *a tavern-keeper.* And a tavern-keeper was bound, by law, "at all times to be furnished with suitable provisions and lodgings, for the refreshment and entertainment of strangers and travellers, and to have stable room, hay and provender for their horses or cattle, on pain of being deprived of his license." By the law, then, as it was prior to December 14th, 1816, an innholder, a common victualler, or a taverner, was required to be *a bona fide tavern-keeper.* But there were large numbers of individuals, who were desirous, as the expression is, to mix liquors—that is, to sell spirits by the glass—who yet were not able, or were not disposed, *to keep a tavern.* A remedy was therefore sought for the evils—as they were deemed—of the old law respecting licenses; and it was obtained in the act of December 14th, 1816;—*a special act for Boston alone!* This act was intended, we have no doubt, for good; but, in its results, it has proved more injurious to our city than any act which was ever passed by our legislature. By this act, a distinction was created between *a common victualler* and *a taverner.* In other words, a common victualler was no longer required "to furnish accommodations for horses or cattle, or lodgings for travellers, or other persons;" while yet he is allowed all the privileges of a bar-room, which were formerly granted to a tavern-keeper, except that he "must close his place of business on Sundays, and on other days at 10 o'clock at night." Here, then, is the law which has le-

galized the tippling-shops that are to be seen in almost every street in our city. It is under this act, that the 594 victualler's licenses, in the foregoing list, were given. Before the passing of this act, no persons but innholders, or tavern-keepers, had a right to sell a glass of ardent spirits *to be drank in the places where they were bought.* Under the old law, therefore, tippling-shops could never have been increased, to the alarming number in which they now exist among us.

But how, it may be asked, are the mayor and aldermen to be exonerated from blame, in granting 594 victualler's licenses, when it is not only known that these are, in fact, licenses for dram-selling, but when the law is imperative, that "no license shall in any case be granted by the mayor and aldermen of the city of Boston, until they shall first have adjudged the same to be for the public good, and have made such judgment a matter of record?" In reply, we ask, How are the mayor and aldermen to form a judgment of the expediency of granting a license to any one who may apply for it? Admitting that ardent spirits may, in any case, be sold by the glass, to be drank where they are bought,—in other words, admitting that dram-shops are to be licensed,—and the law says that they may be,—an applicant for such a shop has then only to show, that the licensing of it will *be for the public good,* and he has a right to demand that a license for it shall be granted to him. Nor is there any difficulty in obtaining *a certificate,* with a sufficient number of signatures attached to it, that "the public good requires" a dram-shop in almost any place where any one may be disposed to establish himself in such a shop. Nay, it is not found impossible to obtain the names even of rich men,—the owners of the very houses for which these licenses are sought, and therefore, it may be supposed, well acquainted with the necessities of the neighborhoods in which their estates are situated,—who will certify that they know, or believe, that *the public good re-*

puires the license which is sought for the house which they have to be rented. What, then, in this case, can the mayor and aldermen do? Would you have them say to the applicants for a victualler's license, even when it is well known that the whole purpose of the application is for a dram-shop, "Gentlemen, there are already half a dozen such shops within half a dozen rods of the place in which you are desirous to establish a new one; and another, therefore, cannot surely be demanded by the necessities of this neighborhood." *The certificate of the owner of the estate, of the agent to whom the renting of it is committed, and of others living within a very short distance of the house, is overwhelming evidence that another is demanded there,* BY A TRUE REGARD TO THE PUBLIC GOOD. In this state of things, the inquiry arises, What can be done? We know, indeed, of but one remedy for this evil; and this remedy is, *a union, or association, of the friends of temperance.* Let this union be effected and maintained, and, within two years, a great moral revolution will be accomplished in our city.

In the *fourth* place, we ask your attention to a few facts respecting intemperance, obtained from the records of the House of Correction in this city.

By an examination of the records of this house, made in the summer of 1829, it was ascertained, that, between the 6th of June, 1823, and the 31st of July, 1829, the number of commitments were *three thousand three hundred and eleven.* Of this number, there were committed,

As common drunkards, and for being found in a state of intoxication, ...	1484
As wanton and lascivious, ...	851
As pilferers, vagabonds and thieves, ...	697
As railers and brawlers, unlicensed sellers of spirituous liquors, keepers of disorderly houses, &c., . .	279
Total, . .	3311

It is important, however, to understand, that these 3311 *commitments* represent, in fact, but 1743 *individuals*. The commitments make about 550 a year, and the persons committed, about 290 a year. Here, then, are 290 persons, making 559 commitments a year. Nor is this all. We here see that there have been 247 *commitments a year, to this prison, for six years, expressly for intemperance*. And how many, think you, of the wanton and lascivious, of the pilferers, thieves, and keepers of disorderly houses, were temperate? Probably not one. We know not how these facts may affect others; but, in our apprehension, they read a lesson of warning, and of duty, to this community, which we may not disregard without great guilt. Our tippling-shops are the nurseries for our House of Correction; and our House of Correction, by the facilities which it furnishes for the excitement and the advancement of every propensity and passion which can degrade our nature, in its turn, is daily ministering to the support of our tippling-shops. Gentlemen, we earnestly solicit your attention to this view of the connexion, and dependencies, of intemperance and crime in our city. Ought these things so to be? Can nothing be done to stop, or to cleanse, these fountains of iniquity? We know that much can be done. And if you will give your influence to the cause, the good will be attained.

In the *fifth* place, we would offer to your consideration a few facts respecting intemperance, from the records of the House of Industry, in South Boston.

From the 6th of May, 1831, to the 18th of the following June, one hundred individuals were admitted into that house. Of these, 77 were adults, and 23 were children. Of these adults,

63 were known to be intemperate;
4 were aged, and sick, and of a good character;
5 were insane, and their former character was unknown;
5 were idiots.

77

Of the children,

15 were brought there through the intemperance of their parents;

5, the character of whose parents was not known;

3, as truants, who could not be kept in school.

23, add 77 adults, = 100.

Here, then, were 63 adults, and 15 children,—that is, 78 individuals out of 100,—who, either directly or indirectly, through intemperance, were brought to our House of Industry in the space of 44 days. Nor is it to be supposed that these individuals were taken on any principle of selection. They were not. They are a random specimen of the characters of the inmates of that house. We are assured by Dr. Fisher, the intelligent and philanthropic physician who has recently resigned his office in that institution, that, if he had been asked his opinion of the proportion who had been brought there through intemperance, during the two years in which he had the medical care of its inmates, he should not have hesitated to have said, that three fourths of them would probably never have been there, if they had been temperate. Three fourths, then, of the expenses of that institution, are attributable to intemperance.

In confirmation of the fairness of this statement, we may adduce similar facts from the records of similar establishments in other places. From the last Report of the New York State Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, we learn that Dr. Pope, physician to the Oneida county poor-house, says that, of 253 inmates of that establishment,—the whole number that have been received there,—246 were brought to poverty, directly or indirectly, by intemperance.

It has also been ascertained, from the superintendents of the poor in Monroe county, New York, that the expense of supporting paupers in that county, in 1829, was $4,956 33.

And it is computed that three fourths of this expense,—that is, $3,317 08,—has arisen from intemperance.

Again. The amount of the Schenectady county tax for the poor is $4,500. The proportion which is fairly traced to the use of ardent spirits is $4,000.

Again. In Rensselaer county, the fact is derived from an examination of the records in the office of the county clerk, that, during the year 1830, 705 paupers were supported there by public charity, at the expense of $7,871 38. The proportion of this expense, for those who were brought to poverty by old age, and other causes beyond their control, was $787 13. The remaining sum of $7,084 25 was expended for the support of those who were brought to poverty by intemperance.

Again. The superintendent of the Albany poor-house has stated, that 173, out of 259, of those who reside there, have owed their poverty and wretchedness, either directly or indirectly, to the use of ardent spirits.

Again. We learn from a letter from two physicians of the alms-house in Philadelphia, that it is their belief, that "at least three fourths of the individuals admitted into that institution, have become its inmates from their habits of intemperance; and that four fifths of the deaths occurring in the alms-house infirmary, are induced by diseases which have been originally produced, or very seriously aggravated, by the previous intemperate habits of the patients."

And, say the trustees of the Baltimore alms-house, "Of the whole number admitted, more than three fourths were positively ascertained to have been reduced to pauperism by intemperance.

Now, if these examples give a fair indication of the proportion of pauperism in the United States, which is found in alms-houses, and which is fairly to be ascribed to intemperance, we have then, in these facts, a most satisfactory an-

swer to that problem in political economy, which has so long puzzled the wisest and most experienced statesmen—"How may this pauperism be most effectually prevented?" Banish intemperance from the land, and you banish with it not only the worst form of pauperism, but a large proportion, also, of the grossest of the offences which are committed against the laws, both of God and man. Combine against intemperance, and appropriate a small part of the amount, which will thus be saved, to the cause of recovering juvenile delinquents, and, with God's blessing, in a very few years we shall have *a Christian city*. We would not, indeed, have it inferred from this statement, that an equal proportion of the poverty in our city, or in our country, is to be ascribed to the intemperate use of ardent spirits. This would be great injustice to a large number, who are as blameless with respect to their poverty, as they are with respect to their natural capacities, or to any of the events over which they had no control. But it is still a fact, and should be published and known, that, if the poverty which arises from intemperance can be cured, or prevented, all the other poverty of our city, and of our country, could easily be provided for. Who, then, will hold back from an enterprise, which so nearly concerns the happiness of every family among us?—which will do so much to advance and secure the happiness of the generations that are before us?

Sixthly. We would present yet one other view of this subject. We refer to the observations of physicians and surgeons, which show that a great number of diseases, and a large part of the serious accidents which occur to laboring men, are consequences of the use of ardent spirits.

A man under the excitement of these poisons, is careless of what happens to himself, or to any one else. If he is driving a cart, or a wagon, he falls asleep, and is pitched out, or gets entangled in a wheel. If laboring on a building, or a

ship, he misses a step, and is precipitated to the ground. And when a fractured limb, or any other serious injury, is caused by these accidents, the unfortunate man, being reduced to a state of weakness, and necessarily deprived of his accustomed stimulus, falls into the fangs of DELIRIUM TREMENS, or the *Horrors*—a monster more dark and frightful than all the fabled Gorgons and Chimeras of the ancient poets. In this disease, the patient is first seized with a general trembling, and a fearful state of mind. He starts at every noise. He apprehends danger from every one who approaches him. He imagines sounds and sights which do not exist but in his own distracted mind. His transient slumbers are filled with visions of horrible objects. Shapes more various and frightful than the waking imagination could create, crowd thick about him; and creatures more horrible than can be described, seem to press upon his heart, or lungs, or brain, and cause there an indescribable distress. Often he believes himself sunk into the regions of damned spirits, and there undergoing various modes of punishment, each distinct from the other, and each more dreadful. The writer of this saw a person under the influence of *Delirium Tremens*, or the *Horrors*, who, in these terrible visions, very distinctly saw the devil, as he is represented in legends, armed with a three-pronged fork, which he constantly employed in making thrusts through his body, and in turning him over on a bed of fire.—A young man, who was affected with Delirium Tremens for the first time, and whose intellects had not yet been greatly impaired by the use of stimulants, when he recovered from the attack, gave a very distinct statement of what he had suffered from the disease. This young man was in a situation which promised a life of honor and usefulness. But, in passing from his house to his place of business, he formed a habit of stopping at soda-shops, to refresh himself with soda-water or mead. There he met other young men,

and was invited by them to taste a *cordial;* and soon contracted a love of the excitement which was thus generated. After a time, the cordials became less gratifying, and a more pungent stimulus was wanted. Brandy was resorted to, and brandy and water became his drink. As he met with one or another of his associates, a proposal was usually made to call in at a shop; and thus the habit of being excited became as strong as the desire for natural food. The effects of this habit on his moral and physical system, were not long in showing themselves. His hand became tremulous. His step faltered. His countenance was bloated. His eye was sunk, and directed to the earth to avoid the glances of those whom he met. His power of conversation failed, except when he had been drinking. He neglected his dress, and avoided, as much as possible, the domestic circle, where he was anxiously looked for, as the hope and comfort of his family. His vice being now well known, his friends united their best endeavors to save him. For a while, these endeavors seemed not to be wholly fruitless; but the evil was too deeply rooted to be removed. In a short time, symptoms of relaxation were seen in him, and suddenly he was again found to be laboring under an attack of *Delirium Tremens.* We have neither time nor space to relate his feelings, as he afterwards described them. They combined all the tortures which have been known to exist, and others which the imagination only could create. He thought himself dying, and dead. Then he passed through a long and dark subterranean passage, so narrow, that, during his course through it, he felt as if he was compressed on all sides. At last he emerged into a vast space, full of horror and distress. Here he was punished in the most dreadful manner, the particulars of which he was able distinctly to describe. On recovering from this disease, he solemnly resolved and promised to give up the use of ardent spirits; and he kept his promise

for about three months. But he has again relapsed into the full indulgence of his former habits; and he is now every hour liable to another, and a fatal, attack of *Delirium Tremens*.

Discouraging, however, as this example may seem, it will not warrant us in the omission, or the relaxation, of any exertions, to liberate the victims of intemperance from their cruel destroyer. Many are truly reformed; many more partially so. But, what is most cheering, multitudes, by associating in the cause of temperance, are effectually prevented from taking the first steps in the way to immediate ruin, and to moral death. Here, then, we think, is another, and most powerful argument, for immediate combinations in this cause in our city. Let these combinations be brought about in the form of societies for the promotion of temperance, and, if all which is to be desired cannot be thus effected, the plague may at least be checked. Great numbers may be saved from the most dangerous accidents, and from the most horrible and fatal diseases; and still greater numbers from the lowest debasement, threatening even the destruction of the soul.

It is a principle in the law of nations, that "every privilege may be revoked, when it becomes detrimental to the state." In other words, governments may impose prohibitions, or restrictions, in every case in which the public good shall clearly require them. If an infectious disease,—the small-pox, for instance,—be in any street, government has a right to direct, that the infected street shall be barred up, and that the infected individuals shall be conveyed out of the city. If the free sale of opium, or of arsenic, in the shops of apothecaries, is found to lead to frequent suicides, or to furnish facilities for the commission of murders, government may direct that no opium, or arsenic, shall be sold by apothecaries, except when prescribed by a physician.

This is a principle which approves itself at once to the common sense of men. And on this principle it was, that, from the earliest period in the history of our country, government have assumed, and exercised, the right to restrict the retailing of ardent spirits. Alcohol is a poison as truly as arsenic; and it is not only the cause of death, to tens of thousands of those who use it, but it occasions frequent murders; the waste of the property of the individual who indulges himself in the use of it; and unnumbered encroachments and depredations upon the property of others. The right and the duty of government, then, in respect to the restriction of the sale of this cause of mischief and misery, are most obvious, and incontestable. But, although government is obliged thus to do what it can for the safety and good of its subjects, the experience of ages has proved, that no very effectual check to this evil is to be looked for in legislative acts. Nor, indeed, are the cases few of public evils, for the correction of which it will be forever in vain to look to the enactments of legislatures, or to the power which may be given to police officers. If great moral ends are to be accomplished, the people must take the power into their own hands. And this is not more true of any enterprise, than it is for the suppression of intemperance. Let the people, then, assume this power; let them combine for the control of this great evil, and for the advancement of temperance, and more will be accomplished for these objects, within even a year or two, than by a hundred statutes, however skilfully constructed, or by a hundred ordinances of the city government.

In thus calling your attention to the means of promoting temperance in our city, we have availed ourselves, Gentlemen, not of abstract arguments, but of *facts;* of facts which speak a language the most unequivocal; and which not only indicate, but, in our judgment, most clearly and

forcibly declare the duty, in this case, not only of every one who calls himself a Christian, but of every well wisher to our community. The question whether any thing, or even whether very much, may be done for the suppression of intemperance where it prevails, and for its prevention among those to whom the evil has not extended, is no longer one of doubtful disputation. It is no longer a matter of experiment whether Temperance Societies may be formed on the principle of a total abstinence from the use of ardent spirits, except as a medicine; or, whether hundreds of thousands may be saved, through these Societies, from disease, disgrace, poverty, sin and misery. But the experiment is yet to be made, whether these Societies can be formed, and maintained, to any considerable extent, *in our large cities;* and whether the good can be attained by them in these cities, which has resulted from them in our villages and country towns. We believe, and are assured, that, by judicious and persevering exertions, as much, proportionally, may be accomplished in this work, in our cities of 60,000, or 200,000 inhabitants, as has been done in our villages of 1, 2, 3, or 4000 inhabitants. Why, indeed, may it not be so? Is the power of the enemy greater in our cities? So, we repeat it, is the power which can be brought to bear against the enemy. Has not all that has been effected in this work, been brought about exclusively by enlightening, and wisely directing, public sentiment on the subject of intemperance? Facts have been collected, and published, and spread abroad; and the hopes and fears, the reason and conscience, the immediate and the eternal interests of men have been addressed. The intelligent and the temperate have looked calmly at these facts. The patriot has seen in them the springs of anarchy, of misrule, of national corruption, and of national ruin. The philanthropist has found in them a principal source of the most pressing

wants, the most acute sufferings, and the deepest degradation of his fellow beings. To the mind of the magistrate, they have disclosed the immediate cause, in a very large proportion of cases, and a powerfully auxiliary cause in almost all the cases, of crime in all its variety of forms. Parents have seen in them the dangers which surround at once themselves and their children. And husbands and wives, parents and children, who have once been united, prosperous and happy, but whose hopes have been blasted, and their souls filled with unutterable misery, have been awakened to a sense of the true origin of their misery, and of the true and only way of recovery from it. Yes, and large numbers of the intemperate, encouraged and strengthened by sympathy, and by examples which they have seen of the reformation of others, have themselves reformed, and have become, in turn, agents for the salvation of many. All, in truth, which has been done in this great work, has been achieved by the combination of the friends of temperance, acting upon public sentiment. Law, instead of being favorable to the cause of reform in this respect, is against it. And custom, though far less than twenty or thirty years ago, is also against it. The only remedial power, therefore, to which, under Providence, we can look, in view of the intemperance which prevails in our city, is, the power of opinion. And we respectfully propose it to you, Gentlemen, to take this power into your hands for the correction of this great evil, by beginning the work of forming *a City Temperance Society in Boston.* Where opinion is now unfavorable to the cause of temperance among us, we believe that it may thus be changed. And, through a change of opinion, custom may be changed. And, through a change of custom, even laws which have been most injurious, may be made harmless. We appeal, then, to the facts we have adduced. Will not these facts

speak as forcibly to the inhabitants of cities, as to those of towns in the country? We are greatly desirous that a fair trial may be made of this question. If you will espouse the cause of reform on this subject, we doubt not that many, in all the other departments of our society, will gladly unite and coöperate with you. Let Boston, in this respect, give an example to the other cities in our country, and we think it will be imitated. And let this example be given, and imitated, and more will be accomplished by it, we believe, than by almost any other measure that can be devised, to give permanency to our free institutions; to perpetuate our national union and independence; to free our country from abject want and crime; and to advance individual, domestic and public virtue, prosperity and happiness.

Respectfully,

JOHN C. WARREN,
LEMUEL SHAW,
AMOS LAWRENCE,
JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

Boston, *August*, 1831.

(Nov., 1891, 20,000)

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